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they discredit the extracts. The essay is as much a literary *genre* as the play or the sonnet; and like these it has beginning, middle and end which should be respected. There is a rather touching stress throughout on the obscurer men of letters, and a care to single out such and commend them for which all readers owe especial gratitude; here and there is real treasure-trove.

Here is matter exciting enough offered in four hundred measured pages in long, smooth, unruffled paragraphs as tranquilly as a Sunday sermon.* Mr. Brownell is beyond dispute the most admired American critic now living. In this rôle he sets up Cooper, knocks down Hawthorne, pats Emerson on the back, turns Poe out-of-doors entirely, and is consistently and temperamentally on the offensive toward Mr. James. He has manifestly two standards—one for the great dead, the other for his contemporaries and friends; for while Shakespeare and Dante are nothing like good enough for him, he awards the only unqualified praise to some college professors and editors still with us. If Mr. Brownell has amused himself a little at the reader's expense, with his sliding scale of values, his apparent contradictions that resolve themselves into subtle paradoxes, his whimsical severity toward his own greater prototype in American letters, the urbane and genial Lowell, the reader may take honorable and friendly revenge by recollecting that no man save at his own peril can praise Thackeray without qualification or lean on Arnold in critical judgment. Mr. Brownell is always serious, reflective, weighty, and he gives us here matter aplenty for a month's reading.

FICTION.

It has long been evident that there was a master in Devon. Just as it was clear when Hardy set the finishing touches to the "Return of the Native" that a master was creating, so now it is clear that another great writer is at work in the neighboring shire.† A wonderful drama is this of the sea and the sky and the earth and the creatures that move over the surfaces. Here we find the simple truth, the intimate reality of the face of

* "American Prose Masters." By W. C. Brownell. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1909.

† "The Haven." By Eden Phillpotts. New York: John Lane Company, 1909.